

From: Charlotte Farmer [mailto:c.farmer@capitol.hawaii.gov] On Behalf Of Rep. Cynthia Thielen
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Subject: Council Meeting Testimony for Bill 69

January 16, 2014

Testimony in Strong Opposition to Bill 69

by Hawai'i State Representative Cynthia Thielen
Assistant Minority Leader, 50th District (Kailua, Kaneohe Bay)

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I am strongly opposed to Bill 69 which would allow advertising on the exterior of City Buses and Handi-Vans on Oahu. Hawaii has long been recognized and admired as a billboard-free state where the intrinsic beauty of our island paradise is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. "The Bus" current logo is a rainbow...symbolic of our home which nature has decorated with vivid rainbows.

We are not just a "tourist town" and we need to hold on to those important differences which set us apart from other travel destinations. We have one of the most highly regarded sign laws in the country, and allowing billboards on the buses could set a precedent for other signage littering our landscape.

Opening day, House Speaker Joe Souki talked about the possibility of returning a larger portion of the transient accommodations tax to the counties in order to promote tourism. With this possibly comes an understanding that both the State and County will work together to not only retain the beauty that we now enjoy, but promote and protect the culture that only Hawaii offers. Billboards on the bus are contradictory to this common goal. Boosting our visitor industry will not be accomplished by degrading the beauty of our state with travelling billboards passing by on every County thoroughfare.

I ask that the Budget Committee DEFER Bill 69 and not allow outdoor advertising on City Buses and Handi-Vans.

Representative Cynthia Thielen